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ABSTRACT

Described are the services offered by helplines, an innovation in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect modeled after the crisis intervention hotlines. It is explained that child abuse and neglect helplines have two primary functions: to provide the parent or child caller with a sympathetic, nonjudgemental listener; and to offer information and referral services. A listing of programs which operate helplines is provided. (SBH)

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT HELPLINES



*A Special Report from the National
Center on Child Abuse and Neglect*

MAY 1977

National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect
U.S. Children's Bureau
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Child Abuse and Neglect Helplines

Helplines are considered an innovation in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, although most are modeled after the crisis intervention hotlines which sprang up in many communities during the wave of drug abuse which swept the country in the late 1960s. Indeed, most community crisis intervention hotlines receive child abuse calls and many have included child abuse as one of the topics covered in their volunteer training.

Child abuse and neglect helplines have two primary functions: to provide the parent or child caller with a sympathetic, nonjudgemental listener; and to offer information and referral services.

Nonjudgemental Listener

Incidents of child abuse often occur during times of stress within families that are socially isolated. Helplines can provide isolated parents with a sympathetic, concerned individual who will listen as the caller airs frustrations, vents anger (which might otherwise have been directed at the children), or simply expresses feelings which cannot be confided to friends or relatives. More than a few child abuse helplines have been organized by parents who were able to

get help in time, and who recognized the need for this type of service.

Information and Referral

Parents whose relationship with their children has not yet developed into a crisis situation but who nevertheless fear that it might, can often be helped by a timely referral to a local counseling center or similar agency. While less dramatic than crisis intervention, this type of service is essential in the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect. Many parents who fear that they may lose control with their children would seek help if they knew where to look. Follow-up of these calls by helpline personnel is highly desirable though not always possible (the parents are not always willing to leave their names or telephone numbers).

In life-threatening situations, most helplines either have volunteers available who will visit the home, or will contact appropriate public agencies (rescue squad, police, or protective services) to intervene.

Besides autonomous child abuse and neglect helplines and general crisis intervention hotlines, many child abuse helplines are run directly by hospitals, protective service agencies, and voluntary agencies. Indeed, 24-hour helplines form an essential component of many child abuse and neglect treatment programs.

Programs With Child Abuse and Neglect Helplines,
Including Helpline Numbers

Many programs operate helplines dealing with child abuse and neglect. The following list of programs, including area codes and telephone numbers, was compiled from information collected in a national survey of child abuse and neglect programs undertaken in the summer of 1975¹. Although questions in the survey did not specifically ask which programs operate helplines, this information was volunteered by some programs. Because only those programs for which the helpline number was available have been listed, the list should not be assumed to be an exhaustive one. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect does not endorse any of the programs listed below; this list serves as a convenience only.

Federal Region I

Connecticut Child Welfare
Association, Inc.
Hartford, CT 06105
(800) 842-2288

Project Survival.
Chatham, NY 12037
(518) 392-2040

Federal Region II

Union County Protective
Services Demonstration Project.
Elizabeth, NJ 07208
(201) 351-5877 or 5878

Bedford-Stuyvesant Family
Services Program.
New York, NY 10003
(212) 638-9100

1. See National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROGRAMS. Prepared by Herner and Company, Washington, D.C. under Contract No. HEW-105-75-1103. Springfield, Va.: National Technical Information Service (NTIS), June 1976. Available through NTIS under publication numbers PB-253 650 (June 1976) and PB-259 002 (November 1976).

Federal Region III

Family Center.
Washington, D.C. 20007
(202) 628-3228

Montgomery County Office of
Human Resources. Child
Protective Services.
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 949-6603

Child Abuse Prevention
Effort (C.A.P.E.).
Philadelphia, PA 19129
(215) 963-0300

Pro-Child: A Child Abuse and
Neglect Demonstration Project.
Arlington, VA 22204
(703) 558-2885 or 2886

West Virginia Child Abuse and
Neglect - Detection Operation
(West Virginia CAN-DO).
Charleston, WV 25302
(800) 642-8595

Federal Region V

Family Support Center.
Aurora, IL 60505
(312) 897-1003

Parental Stress Service.
Chicago, IL 60607
(312) 463-0390

Child and Family Advocates
of Evanston.
Evanston, IL 60201
(312) 463-0390

SCAN.
Fort Wayne, IN 46802
(219) 456-4561

Suspected Child Abuse and
Neglect of Kent County.
Grand Rapids, MI 49502
(616) 784-3480

Federal Region VI

Alexandria Area Child
Protection Center.
Pineville, LA 71360
(318) 448-0829

Shreveport Child Protection
Center.
Shreveport, LA 71103
(318) 635-2108

Child Abuse Line.
San Antonio, TX 78228
(512) 732-2142

Federal Region VII

Child Abuse Hot Line.
Jefferson City, MO 65101
(800) 392-3738

Parents Assistance Line.
Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 397-9909

Federal Region VIII

Child Abuse Prevention.
La Junta, CO 81050
(303) 384-2454

Tipila.
Eagle Butte, SD 57625
(605) 964-8678 or 7033

Federal Region IX

Special Care Project for
the Abused Child and
His Family.
Phoenix, AZ 85008
(602) 267-5577

Imperial County Crisis Hotline.
El Centro, CA 92243
(714) 352-7873

Child or Parental Emergency
Services (C.O.P.E.).
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 252-1116

Children's Trauma Center.
Oakland, CA 94609
(415) 654-5600 (restricted to
the Center's clients)

Parental Stress Service.
Oakland, CA 94610
(415) 655-3535

Parental Stress Hotline.
Palo Alto, CA 94306
(415) 327-3333

Family Stress Service.
Petaluma, CA 94952
(707) 763-9881

Family Service Agency of
San Francisco.
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 826-0800

San Francisco Child Abuse Council.
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 826-0800

C.A.L.M.
Santa Barbara, CA 93102
(805) 963-1115

Child Abuse Listening Line.
Santa Monica, CA 90406
(213) 988-4430

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